

# Awareness and Learning in Second Language Pragmatics

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**Key words:**

個人差、動機づけ、リスニング、語用言語学的気づき、語用論的能力  
individual differences, motivation, listening, pragmalinguistic awareness,  
pragmatic competence

## Abstract

This study investigated the extent to which Japanese EFL learners' learning of complex bi-clausal request forms and their internal modification devices was affected by their awareness of them in an implicit input condition. The study goal was implemented by expanding the structural model identified in Takahashi (2012), which examined causal relationships between motivation and listening proficiency with respect to pragmalinguistic awareness; thus, their influences on pragmatic development were also investigated. The participants were 185 Japanese college students. The concept of awareness was operationalized as the summation of learners' "interest" in the target forms and their "processing load" for these forms; information necessary for this operationalization was obtained through video dictation tasks in the awareness session. Learners' pragmatic development was assessed through discourse completion tasks in the pretest and posttest sessions. The path analyses revealed that learners' noticing of target forms in the input led to their learning of internal modifiers; however, their mastery of bi-clausal request head acts was not confirmed. The results also indicated the relatively low predictive power of motivation and listening proficiency in the current model, demonstrating that they were only indirectly involved in learning in pragmatics.

# 1. Introduction

Pragmatic intervention research undertaken within the past three decades has provided significant insights into the role of input in learning various pragmatic features of a second language (L2) (see Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Takahashi, 2010). The majority of such findings demonstrated that learners develop their L2 pragmatic competence maximally when they are given metapragmatic information on target features, thereby verifying the significance of explicit or deductive teaching (Liddicoat & Crozet, 2001; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Takahashi, 2001; Takimoto, 2009; Trosborg & Shaw, 2008; see also Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010a, 2010b). However, some studies suggested that learners with particular individual differences (ID) dispositions may be able to enhance their pragmatic competence without metapragmatic information; they might notice the target pragmatic features in the input on their own and acquire knowledge of them inductively (Takahashi, 2001). As the first step toward exploring this possibility, Takahashi (2005, 2012) examined the effects of ID factors on pragmalinguistic awareness.

Takahashi's (2005) investigation of the relationships among motivation, proficiency, and the awareness of six pragmalinguistic features found that only intrinsic motivation was significantly associated with awareness of two of the three bi-clausal request forms. Takahashi (2012) improved the research design of Takahashi (2005) and used structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine causal relationships between motivation and listening proficiency with respect to learners' awareness of the target bi-clausal request forms under implicit intervention. The results revealed that learners' listening proficiency and one of the motivation factors were directly involved in their awareness, with the scheme of motivation affecting listening proficiency. Despite their insightful findings, however, Takahashi's two studies failed to further explore the link between awareness and learning in L2 pragmatics. This study investigates this link by expanding the final structural model of Takahashi (2012). Specifically, the primary objective of this study is to examine causal relationships between Japanese English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' awareness of pragmalinguistic features and their learning of them, with motivation and listening proficiency as the causal factors for awareness. In this expanded model, the role of these ID factors is also reexamined.

## 2. Background

### 2. 1. Individual Differences and Pragmalinguistic Awareness: Takahashi (2012)

As the present study expands on Takahashi (2012), first, this section reviews the 2012

study. As mentioned, Takahashi (2012) examined causal relationships between two ID variables—motivation and listening proficiency—with respect to pragmalinguistic awareness. To achieve this goal, three hypothesized structural models were examined in the framework of SEM. In the first model, paths were directly delineated from each of the two ID variables to awareness. In the second model, paths were drawn from the ID variables to awareness, with listening proficiency affecting each of the motivation factors. The third model featured paths delineated from the ID variables to awareness, with motivation explaining listening proficiency.

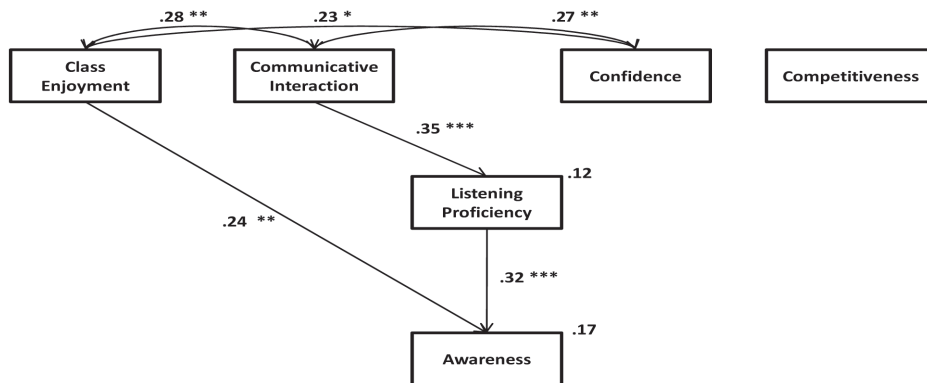
The target forms were complex bi-clausal request forms such as “I was wondering if you could VP” (a mitigated-preparatory statement) or “Is it possible to VP/Do you think you could VP?” (a mitigated preparatory question), which were to be used in relatively imposing situations. Past research has demonstrated that Japanese EFL learners do not completely acquire these complex forms; they prefer to employ mono-clausal request forms such as “Could/Would you (please) VP?” in comparable situations (Takahashi, 1995, 1996, 2001).

The concept of awareness was operationalized as the summation of “interest in the attentional targets” and “processing load for the targets.” The “processing load” was materialized with the dictation scores by adopting a dictation method in the awareness session. This operational definition thus allowed us to assess learners’ awareness during the ongoing input processing, rather than through post-exposure measures.

A total of 104 Japanese college students participated in the awareness session. They were required to be engaged in the video dictation (VD) tasks, which took the form of noticing-the-gap activities. Specifically, they watched request role-plays performed by native speakers (NSs) of English, who used the target bi-clausal forms. Subsequently, they performed dictation of expressions that they found interesting but that were beyond their current command of English. Their awareness of the target forms was assessed based on the above-mentioned operational definition of awareness.

An exploratory factor analysis with promax oblique rotation was performed on the data from the motivation measures, yielding a four-factor solution. The motivation subscale scores, listening proficiency scores (obtained from the Secondary Level English Proficiency Test (SLEP)), and awareness scores were used to examine the above-mentioned three hypothesized models with AMOS 18. The goodness-of-fit indices demonstrated that Model 3 best accounted for the causal relationships between the variables concerned. This final structural model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Specifically, learners who were interested in improving their L2 through real communicative interaction (“Communicative Interaction”) showed higher listening proficiency, and those with higher listening proficiency were more likely to notice the



Note: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . CMIN = 5.874,  $p = .752$ ; GFI = .981; AGFI = .957; CFI = 1.000; RMSEA = .000; AIC = 29.874

**Figure 1. Final structural model (Model 3) with standardized estimates. The error variances are not indicated. Only the significant paths are indicated.**

target request forms. Furthermore, class-oriented learners who attempted to improve their L2 through classroom activities ("Class Enjoyment") were also likely to achieve pragmalinguistic awareness. Thoroughly examining the direct and indirect effects of these ID factors on awareness overall demonstrated that learners' listening proficiency was the most influential factor in explaining their awareness of the target bi-clausal forms. Takahashi's study thus substantiated the causal attributions of pragmalinguistic awareness. The next step in this line of research should be an inquiry into the effect of pragmalinguistic awareness on learning in pragmatics, with a simultaneous exploration of the effects of motivation and listening proficiency as awareness attributions.

## 2. 2. Awareness and Learning in Pragmatics

Schmidt's (1990, 1993, 1995, 2001) noticing hypothesis claims that learners must notice L2 features in the input for subsequent development to occur in the L2, emphasizing that noticing is the "necessary and sufficient condition for converting input into intake" (1990, p. 129). Schmidt later slightly changed his stance by stressing the facilitative role of noticing: "more noticing leads to more learning" (1994, p. 18) (see also Schmidt, 2001; see Robinson, 1995, 2003 for an overview). However, he maintained the concept of "*conscious* noticing or awareness" in L2 learning as the theoretical tenet of his hypothesis, by excluding the possibility of *subconscious* noticing (Simard & Wong, 2001; cf. Tomlin & Villa, 1994).

Pragmatic intervention studies have successfully identified the significant role of conscious noticing or awareness in L2 pragmatics, thereby lending support to the noticing hypothesis. For example, Takahashi (2001) investigated the effects of differential degrees of input enhancement on Japanese EFL learners' learning of bi-clausal request forms. Four

input conditions were set up. One is the explicit teaching condition, in which pragmatic rules for target forms are deductively taught to learners; the remaining three are implicit input conditions, in which learners are not provided metapragmatic information. Takahashi found that learners who received explicit teaching surpassed those under the implicit interventions in learning bi-clausal request forms; in fact, learners under one of the implicit input conditions were more likely to notice discourse markers (“you know,” “well”) in the input than the target forms. This demonstrates that the degree of conscious awareness is a crucial determinant in developing L2 pragmatic competence, and pragmalinguistic development may be relatively difficult in implicit input conditions.

On the other hand, some previous studies in L2 pragmatics have identified cases in which implicit intervention yielded similar degrees of effectiveness to explicit intervention with respect to learning certain pragmalinguistic features in L2 (Martínez-Flor, 2006; Takimoto, 2006a, 2006b, 2009). Takahashi (2001) also reported that a limited number of learners in her implicit conditions noticed target bi-clausal forms and supplied them in the posttest. This suggests that learners can have a conscious awareness of target pragmatic features even when the input is implicitly provided, leading them to learn these features eventually.

In view of these previous findings, an effort should be made to explore more systematically the extent to which awareness under implicit intervention results in pragmatic learning; the level of awareness of target forms in this particular input condition may or may not be sufficient for learners to acquire these forms. This study aims for such an exploration in the framework of SEM, thereby empirically validating the causal relationship between awareness and learning in L2 pragmatics.

### 3. Research Questions

This study addresses the following two research questions:

- (1) To what extent can Japanese EFL learners learn to use complex bi-clausal request forms and their related elements as a result of their noticing them in an implicit input condition?
- (2) How and to what extent do learners’ motivation and listening proficiency affect their learning of bi-clausal request forms and their related elements as functions of awareness attributions?

Technically, the “request forms” are described as “request head acts,” minimal core units for request realization in the request sequence. The “related elements” refer to internal modification devices, which are constituents of the request head acts for the purpose of internally mitigating the requestive imposition with phrasal and syntactic

choices (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). Learners' attention to request forms implies that these internal modifiers are also in their attentional allocation. It is possible that some learners prefer to use only mono-clausal request forms but include such internal modifiers as a result of detecting them in the target request forms as the higher-order units. This study thus deals with internal modification devices independently of the head acts as learning outcomes. Furthermore, "learning" is defined here as the use of exact wording of sentence stems and modification devices or their generalizations in new contexts of request realization.

## 4. Design

As this study is based on Takahashi (2012), the basic research design adopted (for the awareness session) in the 2012 study is summarized here. Three points should be noted. First, the target forms are complex bi-clausal request forms, as listed in Table 1 for each situation used in the awareness session. Internal modification devices include lexical and phrasal downgraders such as softeners (e.g., "just") and intensifiers (e.g., "really," "at all"), and syntactic downgraders such as progressive aspect, past tense, and subjunctive mood.

Second, the situations presented in the awareness session are from the pretest discourse completion test (DCT). This allows learners to directly compare their own request forms supplied in the DCT with the target forms produced by NSs of English in the VD role-plays (noticing-the-gap activities) (Izumi, 2002; Takahashi, 2010).

**Table 1. Target request forms for the awareness session**

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Target Forms</b>
<b>Appointment</b>	Would it be possible to change that appointment to later in the day? (Mitigated-preparatory question) I would really appreciate it if we could change the meeting time. (Mitigated-want statement)
<b>Conflicting Schedule</b>	I was wondering if you could let me write a term paper instead of doing the actual exam. (Mitigated-preparatory statement) I was wondering if there is any chance that you'd let me write a term paper. (Mitigated-preparatory statement)
<b>Reference Book</b>	I was wondering if you would let me keep it. (Mitigated-preparatory statement) Would it be at all possible if I could keep it? (Mitigated-preparatory question)
<b>Recommendation</b>	I was just wondering if you could write me another letter of recommendation. (Mitigated-preparatory statement) I was just wondering if it would be at all possible if you could write the letter. (Mitigated-preparatory statement)

Third, following Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1995, 2001), the notion of awareness is defined as “conscious detection of targets and subsequent subjective experience,” and this is operationally defined as follows (see the “Background” section for more details):

Awareness = Learners’ interest in their attentional targets + Learners’ processing load for the targets

To assess learners’ pragmatic development, a pretest-posttest design is adopted, with different but comparable situations prepared for each test. The concept of learning is operationalized as the gain scores obtained by subtracting the scores of the pretest DCT (Pre-DCT) from those of the posttest DCT (Post-DCT). Learning gains are computed for request head acts and internal modifiers, respectively.

Takahashi’s (2012) final structural model based on Model 3 (see Figure 1) is expanded for the path analysis in this study. The initial model hypothesizes that learners’ awareness of the target request forms leads to their learning of bi-clausal head-act forms and internal modifiers. As the motivation factors “Confidence” and “Competitiveness” were found to explain neither learners’ listening proficiency nor their awareness, they are excluded from the current model. The hypothesis testing in this study is, therefore, confirmatory in nature, rather than exploratory.

## 5. Method

### 5. 1. Participants

The study participants were 185 Japanese college students majoring in sociology, humanities, or economics and attending general English classes to meet their first-year language requirements. All were placed at the advanced level of the English curriculum. They were divided into an Experimental Group (N = 154) and Control Group (N = 31). The data of students who were unable to complete the data elicitation tasks were excluded from analysis. In the Experimental Group, task performances by 104 students (mean age = 18.75; SD = 1.094) were examined. In the Control Group, we analyzed the data of 20 students (mean age = 18.80; SD = .696). All the participants had received formal English instruction in Japan for seven to eight years.

### 5. 2. Materials

#### 5. 2. 1. Pretest and Posttest Measures

The development of the pretest/posttest measures was preceded by a preliminary study aimed at selecting four request situations for the Pre-DCT and four for the Post-

DCT. The "Situation Perception Test" ( $\alpha = .85$ ) (Takahashi, 1995, 1998) was newly constructed for this study. It contained 12 situations in which a college student (status-low) made a request to a professor (status-high). For each situation, participants who had similar educational backgrounds to the participants in the main study ( $N = 62$ ) evaluated the following four factors on a five-point rating scale: (1) the speaker's right to make the request, (2) the hearer's (perceived) obligation in carrying out the request, (3) the hearer's ability to carry out the request, and (4) the hearer's willingness to carry out the request. The sum of the four rating scores was considered the requestive imposition rate for each situation. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was performed with the "situation" as an independent variable and the "imposition rates" as a dependent variable ( $\alpha = .05$ ). The post-hoc means comparison revealed each of the following four sets of situations displayed a non-significant difference in terms of requestive imposition: (1) "Appointment" (means = 14.710; SD = 2.882) and "Paper Due" (means = 15.548; SD = 2.832); (2) "Conflicting Schedule" (means = 12.565; SD = 3.092) and "Wrap-up Party" (means = 12.581; SD = 2.621); (3) "Reference Book" (means = 10.597; SD = 3.049) and "Feedback" (means = 12.065; SD = 2.202); and (4) "Recommendation" (means = 9.887; SD = 2.464) and "Make-up Exam" (means = 9.936; SD = 2.902). The situation showing the higher degree of imposition in each pair was included in the Post-DCT and the other in the Pre-DCT. Note that these eight situations were all ranked higher on the imposition continuum and, thus, bi-clausal request forms were expected to be the most appropriate realization patterns. In fact, this was subsequently validated in one of the other two preliminary studies; two NSs of English showed a preference for bi-clausal request forms in these eight situations. Moreover, Japanese EFL learners' exclusive use of mono-clausal forms was confirmed in the remaining preliminary study<sup>1)</sup>. Table 2 shows the situations used in the Pre-DCT and Post-DCT, along with their descriptions.

In the Pre-DCT, two more situations used in Takahashi (2002) were included as practice or filler situations: "Book" situations (Apology), in which a student needs to apologize to her classmate because she has forgotten to bring a book she borrowed, and "Notebook" situations (Refusal), in which a student needs to refuse to lend his lecture notebook to his classmate who wants to borrow it to prepare for the exam. The Pre-DCT began with the "Book" situation as the practice situation and ended with the "Notebook" situation as the filler.

The DCTs in this study were constructed as "interactive DCTs"; in each situation, the participant was requested to record his/her oral response right after the cue orally provided by the native-English-speaking counterpart who appeared in the video. Specifically, at the beginning of the DCT, detailed written instructions were audio-visually presented, clarifying the role of the participant and the relationship between interlocutors.



Table 2. Situations for the discourse completion tests

Test	Situation	Description
Pre-DCT	Appointment	A student asks the professor to reschedule an appointment because he/she desperately needs to go to a dentist around the same time.
	Conflicting Schedule	A student asks the professor to allow him/her to submit a term paper for course credit, instead of taking a written exam, because he/she needs to participate in an ice hockey tournament scheduled on the same day.
	Reference Book	A student asks the professor to postpone the date of returning a reference book that he/she borrowed before because he/she wants to keep it for two to three more days to complete a paper.
	Recommendation	A student asks the professor to write one of the recommendation letters required for admission to a university in the U.K.
Post-DCT	Paper Due	A student asks the professor to extend the due date for the term paper because he/she has been busy with the final exams for other courses and needs a few more days to complete the paper.
	Wrap-up Party	A student asks the professor to attend an end-of-the-semester party because a classmate is scheduled to leave the seminar to study abroad next semester.
	Feedback	A student asks the professor to read his/her revised paper again and give more detailed comments on it so that it can be submitted for publication.
	Make-up Exam	A student asks the professor to give a make-up exam for the course because he/she had a bad cold and therefore missed the final exam.

For each situation, the written situational description was also audio-visually presented, and this was immediately followed by the appearance of an NS of English who initiated the conversation. As soon as the NS partner provided a cue such as “What can I do for you?” the participant recorded his/her response using the “Speaking” function of the Soft Recorder (developed by Uchida Yoko) installed in the PC-LL rooms. The participant’s recorded response was followed by the NS counterpart’s acceptance response.

For both the Pre-DCT and Post-DCT, the order of the four experimental situations was

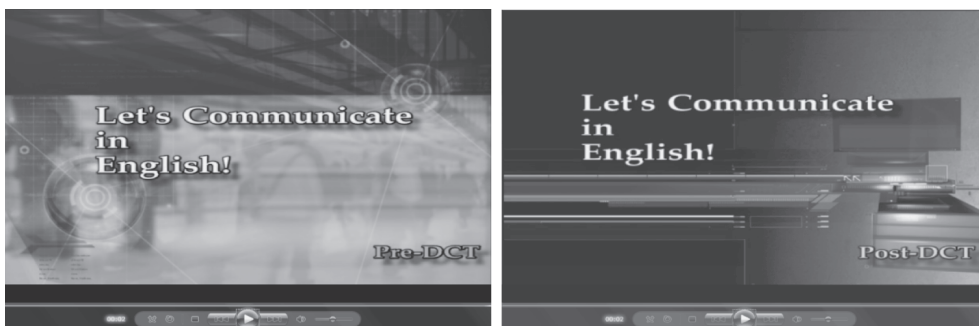


Figure 2. Pre-DCT &amp; Post-DCT (Title Pages)

counterbalanced across the participants, yielding three forms for the Pre-DCT (A, B, and C) and three forms for the Post-DCT (D, E, and F). These DCTs were edited using Ulead VideoStudio 11 and Ulead DVD MovieWriter 6 (see Figure 2). They were then uploaded to a server so that they were accessible in the PC-LL rooms.

### **5. 2. 2. Measures for ID Factors**

Following Takahashi (2005), the motivation questionnaire was constructed based on the motivation measure developed by Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassabgy (1996). The questionnaire contained 47 items, for each of which the strength of motivation was assessed on a five-point rating scale (1 = Totally disagree; 5 = Totally agree).

To measure proficiency, I employed SLEP (Form 6) ( $\alpha=.94$ ) developed by the Educational Testing Service. Because the target proficiency effect was listening, only the listening section of the test was used (full score = 74).

### **5. 2. 3. Materials for the Awareness Session**

The VD exercises were constructed for the awareness session. As mentioned in the "Design" section, the request situations used in the Pre-DCT were included in these exercises. Additionally, two situations that were ranked lowest on the imposition continuum identified through the "Situation Perception Test" were used as fillers. They were the "Thesis" situation (A student asks his/her professor to return a paper with the professor's comments on it as soon as possible) and "Marking Problem" situation (A student asks his/her professor to correct his/her grade on the exam). The NS preference for the use of mono-clausal request forms in these two low-imposition situations was previously confirmed in Takahashi (1995, 1996). Four NSs of English role-played these six situations; they were asked to use bi-clausal request forms in the four experimental situations and mono-clausal forms in the two filler situations. The role-plays were videotaped and edited using Ulead VideoStudio 11 and Ulead DVD MovieWriter 6. Three forms of the VD materials were prepared (A, B, and C), and each form contained dictation tasks for two situations (including fillers).

Each VD task for each situation comprised four sub-tasks: "Just Listen," "Dictation 1," "Dictation 2," and "Dictation 3." In "Just Listen," the participants were asked to listen to the role-play dialogues while searching for any interesting expressions. The subsequent three dictations were intended for noticing-the-gap activities; participants were instructed to write down any expressions they found interesting and judged to be beyond their command. They did so using a black pencil for Dictation 1, red pencil for Dictation 2, and blue pencil for Dictation 3. Immediately after each dictation task, the participants indicated to what extent they were interested in each expression on a seven-point rating

scale (−3 = Not interested in it at all; 3 = Very interested in it) (see Appendix A for the summary of the VD tasks). All the VD tasks (in Forms A, B, and C) were uploaded to a server and accessible through the “ScreenLesson” function of the Soft Recorder.

### 5. 3. Procedures

A series of data collection was undertaken in the regular general English classes taught by this researcher during Fall semester 2008 and Spring semester 2009 for the Experimental Group and Fall semester 2009 for the Control Group. Table 3 summarizes the specific procedures for each semester. In each class of the awareness session (for the Experimental Group), the participants took approximately 40 minutes to finish the VD tasks in one of the three forms; the presentation order of these three forms was counterbalanced across the participants. The participants were required to complete all three forms of the VD exercises in the three classes.

**Table 3. Data collection procedures for each semester**

Week	Tasks	
	Experimental Group	Control Group
1	SLEP (45 minutes)	SLEP (45 minutes)
2	Pre-DCT (approximately 30 minutes)	
3	Awareness Session	Pre-DCT (approximately 30 minutes)
5	Awareness Session	
7	Awareness Session	
9	Post-DCT (approximately 30 minutes)	
12	Motivation Questionnaires (approximately 30 minutes)	Post-DCT (approximately 30 minutes)
13		Motivation Questionnaires (approximately 30 minutes)

### 5. 4. Data Analysis

For both the Experimental and Control Groups, the transcribed data from the Pre-DCT and Post-DCT were coded for head acts and internal modification devices. The head acts were coded based on the “Category of Request Strategies” provided in Takahashi (2001). For the internal modifiers, a coding taxonomy based on Alcón-Soler, Safont-Jordà, and Martínez-Flor (2005) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) was specifically developed for this study to categorize lexical and phrasal downgraders (softeners, intensifiers, subjectiviser, and fillers) and syntactic downgraders (tense, aspect, and subjunctive) (see also Martínez-

Flor, 2009, 2012)<sup>2)</sup>.

For the identified head acts, the use of bi-clausal request forms was counted as two points; the use of bi-clausal forms along with inappropriate mono-clausal forms (e.g., “I would like you to VP”), as one point; and the use of mono-clausal forms (irrespective of their appropriateness), as zero points. Internal modification devices were scored as follows: one point for the use of one modifier, two points for the use of two modifiers, and three points for the use of three or more modifiers. The means of the head-act scores for the four situations in the Pre-DCT and Post-DCT were computed, and the gain in the means (Post-DCT – Pre-DCT) was established as the “Head Act” learning score to be included in the SEM analysis. Likewise, the “Internal Modifier” score was obtained by calculating the gain in the pretest/posttest means of the internal-modification scores.

As mentioned in the “Design” section, the best final structural model identified in Takahashi (2012) was the starting point for the SEM analysis in this study. Two motivation factors (“Class Enjoyment” and “Communicative Interaction”), listening proficiency (“Listening Proficiency”), awareness of the target forms (“Awareness”), and two types of pragmalinguistic features assessed through the DCTs—“Head Act” and “Internal Modifier”—were included in the model. The score for each motivation factor was obtained by averaging the rating scores of the items contributing to the particular factor. The awareness scores were calculated by combining the “processing load” scores and “interest” scores for the accurately dictated words in the target forms (each converted for a total score of 10 for each situation; a total score of 80 for the four situations). The “processing load” score for each situation was calculated as the sum of the dictation scores for the target forms: three points for the words written in black, two points for those in red, and one point for those in blue (see Appendix A). All factors in the model were treated as the observed indicator variables. The initial hypothesized model was analyzed using AMOS 18 ( $\alpha = .05$ ).

## 6. Results

### 6. 1. Effectiveness of Pragmatic Intervention

This section focuses on learning gains identified from the DCTs in the framework of comparison between the Experimental and the Control Groups. First, it should be noted that these two groups were empirically homogeneous in terms of their motivational strengths and listening proficiency. A two-way repeated measures ANOVA ( $\alpha = .05$ ) revealed no significant interaction effect for motivation ( $F(3, 366) = 1.592, p = .194$  (Greenhouse-Geisser), partial  $\eta^2 = .013$ ); an independent t-test ( $\alpha = .05$ ) demonstrated no significant difference between these two groups’ listening proficiency ( $t(122) = -1.506, p$

=.135) (see Appendices B-1 and B-2 for the descriptive statistics for the ID variables of the Control Group). Thus, in the context of this study, any differences observed between the two groups can be attributed to the effectiveness of the awareness session.

Table 4 shows the results of the descriptive statistics for the Pre-DCT and Post-DCT. For both the head acts and internal modifiers, larger learning gains were observed for the Experimental Group than for the Control Group. To accurately assess the degree of learning, for each of the two features, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was performed with the group as the between-subject variable (two levels) and the test as the within-subject variable (two levels) ( $\alpha = .05$ ). It was found that the interaction effect (Group  $\times$  Test) was not significant:  $F(1, 122) = 2.239, p = .137$  (Greenhouse-Geisser), partial  $\eta^2 = .018$  for the head acts, and  $F(1, 122) = .559, p = .456$  (Greenhouse-Geisser), partial  $\eta^2 = .005$  for the internal modifiers. This demonstrated that learning gains observed for the Experimental Group were not large enough, compared to those for the Control Group. Besides, for both features, the mean scores for the Experimental Group were below one. All these suggest that the VD tasks were not effective enough for the Experimental participants to learn bi-clausal request forms and internal modification devices. Thus, the relatively ineffective nature of implicit intervention was confirmed. However, this does not mean that noticing did not occur during implicit intervention. In fact, Takahashi (2012) found learners did notice differentially the target request forms, as represented in their awareness scores (see Schmidt, 2001). Then, two predictions could be made with respect to the causal relationship between awareness and learning in this study. As the noticing hypothesis predicts, learners who noticed the target forms even in the implicit input may be able to steadily learn bi-clausal forms and internal modifiers on their own. On the other hand, in light of the results related to the intervention effect, we could also predict that learners who noticed the target features in the implicit input may not substantially enhance their competence in these pragmalinguistic features. Causal relationships as such will be explored in Section 6. 2.

**Table 4. Means and standard deviations for the discourse completion tests**

Request Features	Pre-DCT		Post-DCT	
	Experimental (SD)	Control (SD)	Experimental (SD)	Control (SD)
<b>Head Acts</b>	.026 (.1203)	.050 (.1539)	.108 (.2804)	.038 (.1223)
<b>Internal Modifiers</b>	.022 (.0992)	.050 (.2236)	.120 (.2336)	.100 (.1701)

Note: Experimental: N = 104, Control: N = 20 Scale Range: Head Acts 0 – 2, Internal Modifiers 1 – 3

## 6. 2. Test of the Structural Model

Figure 3 presents the hypothesized model. The two motivation subscales—"Class Enjoyment" and "Communicative Interaction"—were exogenous variables; covariance was then established between these motivation factors. The remaining four variables were treated as endogenous variables. There were two criterion measures in this model: "Head Act" and "Internal Modifier."

This hypothesized model was submitted for hypothesis testing using AMOS 18 ( $\alpha = .05$ ). The modification indices were also examined for any possible paths from the ID variables to the criterion measures and between the two criterion measures. The descriptive statistics for each variable in the model are shown in Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 (see Appendix C for the motivation questionnaire items and results of the factor analysis).

A series of path analyses yielded the final structural model as shown in Figure 4. The four paths identified in Takahashi (2012) were reconfirmed (on the basis of the standardized estimates): "Class Enjoyment"  $\rightarrow$  "Awareness" ( $\beta = .241, p < .01$ ), "Listening Proficiency"  $\rightarrow$  "Awareness" ( $\beta = .315, p < .001$ ), and "Communicative Interaction"  $\rightarrow$  "Listening Proficiency" ( $\beta = .345, p < .001$ ). "Class Enjoyment" and "Listening Proficiency" jointly explained 17% of the variance in the awareness score ( $R^2 = .172$ ).

The central concern in this study was the causal relationships between learners' pragmalinguistic awareness and their pragmatic development. From "Awareness," however, only the path linked to "Internal Modifier" was significant ( $\beta = .399, p < .001$ ). In the SEM analysis, two additional paths were identified as data-driven paths based on the modification indices: "Listening Proficiency"  $\rightarrow$  "Internal Modifier" ( $\beta = -.268, p < .01$ ), and

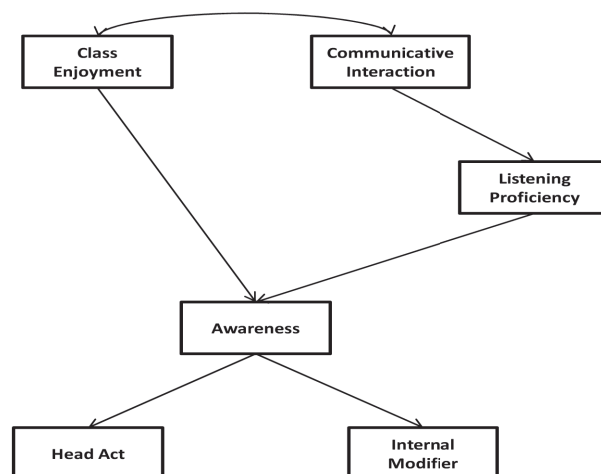


Figure 3. Hypothesized structural model.

Table 5. Means and standard deviations for “Head Act” and “Internal Modifier”

Learning Scores	Means	Standard Deviation
Head Act	.082	.2663
Internal Modifier	.099	.2593

Note: Scale Range: Head Act 0 – 2, Internal Modifier 1 – 3

Table 6. Means and standard deviations for “Class Enjoyment” and “Communicative Interaction”

Motivation Factor	Means	Standard Deviation
Class Enjoyment	3.065	.6186
Communicative Interaction	3.776	.6453

Note: Scale Range: 1– 5

Table 7. Means and standard deviation for “Listening Proficiency” (SLEP raw score)

Skill / Section	Means	Standard Deviation
Listening (74 items)	57.17	5.847

Note: Full score = 74 (74 items), Maximum score = 67, Minimum score = 38

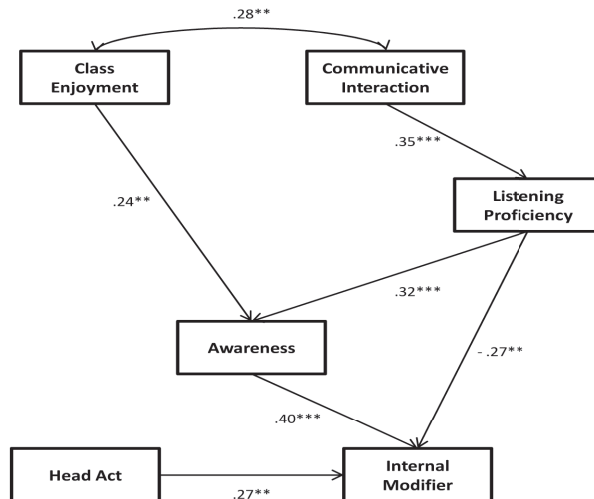
Table 8. Means and standard deviations for “Awareness”

Situation	Means	Standard Deviation
Appointment	8.931 [Processing load = 2.441 / Interest = 6.490]	4.472
Conflicting Schedule	6.093 [Processing load = 1.798 / Interest = 4.295]	3.775
Reference Book	4.465 [Processing load = 1.420 / Interest = 3.045]	3.879
Recommendation	8.297 [Processing load = 3.321 / Interest = 4.976]	5.123
Awareness Total	27.786	11.805

Note: Full processing load for each situation = 10  
 Full interest rate for each situation = 10  
 Full awareness score for each situation = 20 (10+10)  
 Full total awareness score = 80 (20 x 4)

“Head Act” → “Internal Modifier” ( $\beta = .265, p < .01$ ). It was found that “Awareness,” “Listening Proficiency,” and “Head Act” shared 23% of the variance in the internal-modification score ( $R^2 = .229$ ).

For this model, the following goodness-of-fit indices were obtained: Minimum Discrepancy (Chi-squared) (CMIN)=2.102,  $p = .978$ ; Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)=.993; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)=.982; Comparative Fit Index (CFI)=1.000; Root



Note: \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Figure 4. Final structural model with standardized estimates. The error variances are not indicated. Only the significant paths are indicated.

Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .000; Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) = 28.102. They indicated that this final structural model well fit the data.

The final structural model provided five major findings for this study. First, most importantly, we could not confirm that learners' noticing the target bi-clausal request forms in the implicit input accounted for their learning bi-clausal forms. In other words, even if learners noticed the target request forms in the input, their mastery of bi-clausal structures was not always assured.

Second, learners were more likely to learn to use internal modification devices in their request realization as a result of noticing the target bi-clausal request forms in the implicit input. Such learners might use these internal modifiers in formulating their bi-clausal request head acts or in performing their mono-clausal forms. In view of the first major finding above, the latter case appears more plausible.

Third, learners who were able to learn to use bi-clausal request head acts were more likely to employ internal modifiers when making requests. Note, however, that we cannot deny the possibility that such learners might use the internal modifiers along with the use of mono-clausal request forms in some situations.

Fourth, though learners' listening proficiency was found to be a causal factor for their learning internal modification devices as a result of their noticing the target forms in the input, its predictive power for this criterion variable was not strong enough. This was based on the relatively small indirect effect of "Listening Proficiency" on "Internal Modifier" ( $\beta = .125$ ). On the other hand, the direct effect of "Listening Proficiency" on the same



criterion variable ( $\beta = -.268$ ) indicated that learners who had lower listening proficiency tended to use internal modifiers more often. No involvement of “Awareness” here could be construed as follows: The possibility of lower-proficient learners’ awareness of the target request forms was relatively low, which might be induced by their accurately detecting only word- or phrase-level modifiers in the dictation tasks.

Fifth, although the two motivation factors directly and indirectly influenced pragmalinguistic awareness, their effects on learners’ mastery of internal modification devices were extremely small, as shown in the indirect effect of “Class Enjoyment” on “Internal Modifier” ( $\beta = .096$ ) and the indirect effect of “Communicative Interaction” on the same criterion measure ( $\beta = -.049$ ). In other words, it is very unlikely that learners’ noticing the targets triggered only by their having class-oriented or communication-oriented dispositions substantially accounts for their developing pragmatic competence in internal modification.

## 7. Discussion

On the basis of the noticing hypothesis, we can predict that learners’ noticing of the target pragmalinguistic features in the implicit input results in their learning of bi-clausal head acts and internal modification devices. On the other hand, the results related to the intervention effect lead to the following prediction: Learners who become aware of the target features in the implicit input may not be able to sufficiently learn these pragmalinguistic features. With respect to the learning of head acts, the latter prediction was confirmed; acquisition of internal modifiers was amenable to the former prediction. This suggests that the causal relationship between awareness and learning is constrained by the types of pragmalinguistic features.

A question arises here as to why bi-clausal request forms were not sufficiently learnable in spite of noticing, but internal modifiers were. The most plausible explanation is the formal complexity of the pragmalinguistic features and the entailed differential depth of processing for analyzing their functions in the input ( Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Izumi, 2002; Schmidt, 2001; Takahashi, 2010; Takimoto, 2009; see also Doughty, 2003, Schmidt, 1993; Simard & Wong, 2001 for the significance of functional analysis). In other words, detection of complex formal features exhausts learners’ attentional resources, resulting in shallower processing for a further form-function analysis; in contrast, detection of less complex formal features allows learners to still maintain their sufficient attentional resources, and this may guarantee greater depth of processing for the functional analysis. It is obvious that the target bi-clausal request forms manifest far more complex structures than the internal modification devices, which are lexical and phrasal in nature. As

demonstrated in the final model, learners with higher listening proficiency achieve higher awareness scores by accurately reproducing target sentences in the dictation, but probably without being able to further explore accurate form-function mappings because of their possible processing or memory overload; thus, this is essentially related to task demands (Izumi, 2002; Robinson, 2003; Schmidt, 1990, 2001; Simard & Wong, 2001). This may reduce their abilities to generalize “pragmatic rules” in new contexts, leading to their failure to perform complex bi-clausal head acts in the posttest. However, such learners may easily be able to examine the functional aspects of internal modifiers because of their adequate level of processing load kept as a result of attending to these less complex features; they are thus more likely to learn to use these modification devices (but predominantly in mono-clausal request head acts). With regard to learners having lower listening proficiency, as also indicated in the model, their lower proficiency does not enable them to reproduce complex bi-clausal sentences in their entirety (thus, the lower degree of awareness of the target forms) but allows them to concentrate on less complex, word-level internal modifiers as their attentional targets. This may provide them with more chances of making efficient use of their attentional resources for a further analysis of the functions of internal modification devices, which eventually results in learning. Thus, I argue for the depth of processing of input as an overriding factor of listening proficiency. Izumi (2002) contends that “cursory and superficial processing of input does not lead to learning of the target structure, no matter how consciously or intensely one attends to a particular form” (p.571). Thus, the issue here is the *quality* of awareness (see also Schmidt, 2001; Takahashi, 2010).

With regard to the influence of learners’ motivation on their learning of bi-clausal request forms and internal modifiers, only minute “indirect” effects were identified for modification devices. Thus, it can be concluded that learners’ motivation is more deeply involved in their pragmalinguistic awareness and is less likely to constrain their pragmatic learning in any explicit manner. It has been claimed that attention involves three subsystems—alertness, orientation, and detection—with detection as the central function in attentional allocation (Tomlin & Villa, 1994), and Schmidt (1993, 2001) contends that motivation is related to alertness (see also Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Simard & Wong, 2001; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). This suggests that motivation is a crucial determinant of attentional allocation but may not be so beyond it. From a theoretical perspective as well, then, the above argument seems very plausible.

## 8. Conclusion

By expanding Takahashi’s (2012) model, this study investigated causal relationships

between Japanese EFL learners' awareness of pragmalinguistic features in the implicit input and their learning of such features; an attempt was also made to explore the influences of motivation and listening proficiency, as attentional attributions, on pragmatic learning. Learners' attentional targets were bi-clausal request forms and internal modifiers that mitigate impositive forces of the head acts internally. The path analyses in the SEM framework revealed that learners' pragmalinguistic awareness differentially affected their learning in pragmatics. Their noticing of the target forms in the input accounted for their learning of internal modification devices, whereas this same noticing did not cause substantial learning of bi-clausal head acts. The obtained findings could be explained by pragmalinguistic complexity and the entailed differential depth of processing for analyzing form-function relationships in the input. Learners' mastery of less complex internal modifiers might be triggered by their deeper processing for such an analysis, while their learning of far more complex bi-clausal head acts might be restricted by their entailed shallower processing for such pragmatic analysis. All these suggest that the quality of awareness determines eventual learning. From this perspective, then, whether the input is provided explicitly or implicitly may not be an issue (cf. Doughty, 2003); attaining the adequate depth of processing for accurate form-function analysis of the input may be more crucial.

This study also demonstrated that the predictive power of motivation and listening proficiency on pragmatic learning is, overall, relatively small. In particular, as for motivation, the difficulty of the experimental tasks induced by the use of listening modality might repress the emergence of its genuine influence on learning (Izumi, 2002; Schmidt, 2001; Simard & Wong, 2001). Theoretically, however, a more pertinent explanation is its intrinsically deeper involvement in awareness than in learning of pragmatic features. Empirical validation in this regard is necessary. At the same time, future studies should seek to clarify how various other ID variables, particularly working memory capacity, constrain the depth of processing in attentional allocation in L2 learning.

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### Notes

- 1) These learners were Japanese college students who had similar characteristics to the participants in the main study (N=30). They were asked to perform open-ended DCTs containing these eight situations.

- 2) The data were also coded for external modifiers, such as preparators, grounders, disarmers, expanders, promise of a reward, and imposition minimizers. However, the analysis of the external modifiers is beyond the scope of this study.

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## Appendix A

**Video Dictation Tasks for Each Situation and Dictation Score Calculation (Reproduced from Takahashi (2012))**

Task	Activity	Dictation Score for the Target Forms
<b>Just Listen!</b>	Listen to the whole dialogue.	
<b>Dictation 1</b>	Dictate useful/interesting expressions with a black pencil. + Show the degree of interest in them.	3 points per accurately dictated word
<b>Dictation 2</b>	Dictate useful/interesting expressions with a red pencil. + Show the degree of interest in them.	2 points per accurately dictated word
<b>Dictation 3</b>	Dictate useful/interesting expressions with a blue pencil. + Show the degree of interest in them.	1 point per accurately dictated word

## Appendix B-1

**Control Group: Means and Standard Deviations for Four Motivation Factors**

Motivation Factor	Means	Standard Deviation
<b>Class Enjoyment</b>	3.360	.5205
<b>Communicative Interaction</b>	3.694	.5089
<b>Confidence</b>	2.610	.5046
<b>Competitiveness</b>	3.438	.7473

*Note:* Scale Range: 1– 5

## Appendix B-2

**Control Group: Means and Standard Deviation for Listening Proficiency (SLEP Raw Score)**

Skill / Section	Means	Standard Deviation	Maximum	Minimum
<b>Listening (74 items)</b>	59.25	4.411	68	53

*Note:* Full score = 74

## Appendix C

### Motivation Questionnaire Items and the Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor 1: Class Enjoyment [10 items / $\alpha$ = .878], Eigenvalue = 6.191, Variance (%) = 22.930
19. I like contents of this class: .888
43. I often feel lazy or bored when I study for this class: -.772
20. It is important to me to learn the course material in this class: .768
21. What I learn in this class will help me in other English classes: .736
2. My English class is a challenge that I enjoy: .644
3. When class ends, I often wish that we could continue: .617
6. I would take this class even if it were not required: .588
41. My teacher's opinion of me in this class is very important: .557
22. I am certain I can master the skills being taught in this class: .487
42. My relationship with the other students in this class is important to me: .465
Factor 2: Communicative Interaction [8 items / $\alpha$ = .814], Eigenvalue = 3.225, Variance (%) = 11.946
13. Studying English is important because it will allow me to communicate with NNS of English: .761
12. Studying English is important because it will allow me to communicate with NS of English: .737
14. I want to be more a part of the cultural group of native English speakers: .690
10. I am learning English to understand films, videos, or music in English: .565
15. I would like to learn several foreign languages: .555
16. I enjoy meeting and interacting with people from many cultures: .474
11. I am learning English because my future job or social activities may require higher proficiency in English: .472
18. English is important to me because it will broaden my world view: .445
Factor 3: Confidence [5 items / $\alpha$ = .650], Eigenvalue = 2.261, Variance (%) = 8.375
27. I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam: -.599
26. When I take a test, I think about how poorly I am doing: -.478
24. I am worried about my ability to do well in this class: -.477
35. In general, I am an exceptionally good language learner: .451
28. I don't worry about making mistakes when speaking in front of this class: .418
Factor 4: Competitiveness [4 items / $\alpha$ = .656], Eigenvalue = 2.093, Variance (%) = 7.750
8. Being able to speak English will add to my social status: .632
9. Increasing my proficiency in English will have financial benefits for me: .623
38. I learn best when I am competing with other students: .574
39. I want to do better than the other students in this class: .558